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DE RUEHNK #0105 0351420  
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O 041420Z FEB 09  
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8082  
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0446  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 1968  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0767  
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE PRIORITY 0049  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0063  
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0872

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 000105

SIPDIS

SECSTATE FOR AF/W - BOULWARE/DENNISON; PARIS FOR KANEDA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/04/2024

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [MR](#)

SUBJECT: MORE AMBIGUITY ON MAURATANIAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 101

Classified By: Charge d'affaires, a.i. Cornelius C. Walsh for reasons 1.4b and 1.4d

1.(U) Today's Websites and one French language newspaper carried differing pictures of Israeli-Mauritanian relations.

12. (U) Several non-government sites, including for.Mauritania, the site of the National Front for the Defense of Democracy (FNDD), the major opposition to the Junta, covered the visit this week of the Mauritanian Junta's Minister of Information, Ould Moine, to Tehran and his reception by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. These sites quoted the Minister as stating quote we have totally and definitively broken diplomatic relations with Israel.

13. (U) However, the official Mauritanian news agency site and today's official government newspaper, Horizon, failed to mention the Tehran meeting and instead headlined a meeting the same day between the Junta Foreign Minister, Mohammed Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou. As of 1400 hrs. no mention of the Ould Moine's total and definitive break in Israeli diplomatic relations had been announced or mentioned in the official media.

14. (U) One newspaper, the anti-regime, independent, L'Authentique, took note of the Information Minister's comments. In an article titled Mauritania, From the Axis of Virtue to an Axis of Evil, noted the Info Minister's words as having been quote we don't regret having broken with Israel. end quote. L'Authentique editor, Cheikh Aidara, went on to note that quote in any case the door is not completely closed, according to many observers who view the regime's suspension (and not a rupture) as a cry for help from a suicide hoping to be saved before leaping into the void. end quote.

14. (C) As noted in reftel, continued ambiguity provides no relief for the Israeli Embassy in Nouakchott. The Tehran meeting, however, does fit the timeline given earlier by the Israeli MFA for the closure of the Mauritanian Embassy in Tel Aviv, even if that closure is non-official and unannounced.

15. (C) Comment: The regime wants to have its cake and eat it, too. At some point the posturing will have to stop. The FNDD may be trying to paint the regime into a corner to further besmirch its reputation with the West. The regime itself wants credibility and support from any and all corners, axis of evil notwithstanding. Foreign Minister Ould Mohamedou is a serious player with an eye on the east. The

stately non-committal meeting in Addis fits his style. Ould Moine is a looser sort; at one time the regime hoped to have him give weekly press conferences but found he wandered off-message. Until the Foreign Minister makes a definitive statement one way or the other regarding Israel we shall remain in the dark regarding the Junta's real intentions.  
End Comment  
WALSH